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**HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE**

AWO Endorses Proposed Licensing System Changes.....2

USCG Policy Advisory Council Posts Decisions on TWIC Implementation.....3

TWIC Rollout Continues.....4

Towing Safety Advisory Committee Applicants Sought.....5

TWIC Enrollment Update.....5

Exxon Files Brief with Supreme Court in Appeal of *Exxon Valdez* Case.....6

“Rolling on the River: Life on a Tugboat”..7

Army Corps of Engineers to Expedite MRGO Closure.....9

Cape Cod Canal Survey Data Released to Aid Navigation.....10

Atlantic Region Members to Revise Regional Priorities at Annual Meeting....10

CARB Harbor Craft Regulation Amendment Delayed.....11

Ninth Coast Guard District Accepts Eighth District Limited Geographic Licenses for Towing Vessels Engaged in Fleeting Operations.....11

Sector Ohio Valley: Barge Breakaway Policy Implemented.....11

Missouri River Annual Operating Plan Released.....11

## Senate Hearing Held on *Cosco Busan* Oil Spill

On December 18, 2007, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, held a hearing on “Oil Spills from Non-Tank Vessels: Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities.” The hearing was sparked by the November 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill and focused on the prevention of oil spills, mostly the Coast Guard’s resources for both prevention and response. The hearing touched on many other issues, however, the following of which are important for the towing industry.

### Limits of Liability

The witness testifying on behalf of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Sarah Fleming, explained to the subcommittee that a recent GAO report found that the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund was not large enough to cover a catastrophic spill, and that the limits of liability were disproportionately low for some vessels, specifically tank barges. The subcommittee called for action to be taken to remedy that discrepancy. Also discussed was the forthcoming Coast Guard rule that will require that companies produce Certificates of Financial Responsibility, which would prove that they could pay to clean up a spill, should one occur.

### Bunker Fuel

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), calling bunker fuel “the worst type” of fuel, announced that she and Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) have written a bill banning bunker fuel and called for the Coast Guard to push for an international treaty to ban it. A number of towing companies currently use bunker fuel, so any kind of ban would affect the industry.



Sen. Cantwell

### Non-Tank Vessel Response Plan Rulemaking

The Senators were unanimous in acknowledging the importance in completing the rulemaking for non-tank vessel response plans as soon as possible because, not only was the *Cosco Busan* a non-tank vessel, but Congress also passed a law requiring operators of non-tank vessels to submit response plans by August 2005. ADM Thad Allen, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, explained that the delay is due to a backlog resulting from the Coast Guard’s increased security duties after the September 11, 2001, attacks. ADM Allen said the Coast Guard has already published interim guidance (Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular 01-05) to

(continued on page 2)



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## AWO Endorses Proposed Licensing System Changes

The Coast Guard should move forward quickly to implement proposed changes to the licensing system for towing vessel officers, AWO told the agency in comments submitted December 17, 2007. AWO's comments endorsed the changes proposed by the Coast Guard in its September 17 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Training and Service Requirements for Merchant Marine Officers. As recommended by the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), the NPRM proposed removing the expiration date of the radar-observer endorsement from the face of the merchant mariner license; allowing an Apprentice Mate (Steersman) of towing vessels to reduce the sea-service time required to obtain a license as Mate (Pilot) of towing vessels by completing a Coast Guard-approved training program; and, establishing an alternate progression for holders of Master of Steam or Motor Vessels licenses of not more than 200 gross registered tons (GRT) to obtain a license as Mate (Pilot) of towing vessels.

"Finalizing this rulemaking and implementing the proposed changes will require a minimal expenditure of Coast Guard resources, but will have a material effect on the ability of the tugboat, towboat and barge industry to crew its vessels efficiently and safely at a time when the industry faces a severe shortage of vessel personnel," AWO wrote.

AWO supported, without amendment, the removal of the expiration date of the radar-observer endorsement from the face of the license, saying it would reduce confusion and eliminate unnecessary licensing transactions without compromising navigation safety. AWO also supported the reduction in sea-service time for mariners who complete approved training programs. This change will promote safety by

encouraging companies to develop high-quality training programs for Coast Guard approval, while allowing mariners to progress more efficiently through the towing vessel officer licensing system.

AWO also supported the proposed "alternate progression" provision, which will facilitate the entry of experienced operators of crewboats, supply boats, small passenger and fishing vessels into the towing industry. AWO recommended two additional modifications to broaden the utility of the proposed provision without undermining its

fundamental objectives, including:

- 1) allowing mates as well as masters of steam or motor vessels of less than 200 GRT to be included in the alternate progression provision; and,
- 2) specifying that individuals seeking to utilize this provision must have 36 months of experience while sailing under or holding their existing license.

Modifying the provision in this manner would allow experienced mariners who have held licenses as Mate of Steam or Motor Vessels of less than 200 GRT for more than 36 months, but are currently sailing in unlicensed capacities aboard towing vessels, to move immediately into the wheelhouse provided they have completed the Towing Officer Assessment Record and have passed the apprentice mate (steersman) exam.

The NPRM can be found [here](#). For a copy of AWO's comments, click [here](#).

**"The Coast Guard should move forward quickly to implement proposed changes to the licensing system for towing vessel officers."**

**- AWO**

### Hearing Held on *Cosco Busan* Oil Spill

*(continued from page 1)*

help companies comply with the regulation until a final rule is issued.

#### Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)

Senator Boxer announced that she and Senator Feinstein have written a bill that allows a Coast Guard

VTS Director to command pilots to modify the speed and/or direction of their vessels, provides \$20 million to upgrade VTS and requires pilots to carry laptops to help them navigate.

For more information, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or [mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com](mailto:mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com).

# Coast Guard Policy Advisory Council Posts Decisions on TWIC Implementation

On November 21, the Coast Guard's TWIC/MTSA Policy Advisory Council (PAC) released two decisions regarding implementation policy for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program. The PAC is a mechanism that is used to ensure coordination on policy issues within Coast Guard headquarters. It was instituted several years ago to address questions related to vessel and facility security plan implementation and has recently been reinstated to address TWIC implementation questions.

The first decision addressed the definition of "law enforcement officials" who are not required to obtain a TWIC in order to access secure areas of facilities or vessels. The PAC determined that for purposes of the TWIC program, a law enforcement official is "any officer or employee of any agency or authority of the United States, a State, a commonwealth, a territory, a political subdivision of a State or territory, or an Indian tribe, who is empowered by law to:

- Investigate or conduct an official inquiry into a potential violation of law; or
- Prosecute or otherwise conduct a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding arising from an alleged violation of the law;
- and is doing so while acting in their official capacity."

Thus, state environmental officials with regulatory enforcement responsibilities, state and municipal fire department personnel and other state or local personnel



requiring access to secure areas for purposes of regulatory inspections, will not be required to obtain a TWIC.

The second decision related to acceptable escorting standards aboard U.S.-flagged vessels operating in foreign waters. Because the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 requires that individuals who do not hold a TWIC be escorted at all times while in a secure area of a vessel, it was necessary for the Coast Guard to address the question of escort requirements for foreign port workers aboard U.S. vessels. Because methods to control access to the vessel should already be included in the vessel security plan (including ensuring that foreign port workers do not access restricted areas unless deemed necessary), the Coast Guard determined that U.S. vessels operating in foreign waters will be considered in compliance with the escort requirements provided they are operating in accordance with a Coast Guard-approved vessel security plan.

These decisions can be accessed via the U.S. Coast Guard Homeport Web site by clicking [here](#).

AWO made extensive use of the Policy Advisory Council mechanism in the early days of vessel security plan/Alternative Security Program implementation. AWO members who have TWIC-related questions that may warrant consideration by the PAC should contact Jennifer Carpenter or Krista Reddington at (703) 841-9300, extensions 260 and 251, respectively, or by email at [jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com](mailto:jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com) or [kreddington@vesselalliance.com](mailto:kreddington@vesselalliance.com). ☺

## Important Dates and Reminders

..... at a glance

*For more information, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, unless otherwise noted.*

**January 17-18, 2008:**  
Southern Region Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

**January 24-25, 2008:**  
Atlantic Region Annual Meeting, Miami, FL.

**January 30-31, 2008:**  
Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN.

**February 6-7, 2008:**  
Pacific Region Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.

# TWIC Rollout Continues

## *Stakeholders Discuss Implementation Challenges with TSA and Coast Guard*

The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Stakeholder Communication Committee (TSCC) met on January 8 to discuss the challenges being faced as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) continues the TWIC rollout. During the meeting, TSA shared some statistics from 44 TWIC enrollment centers that have become operational since the end of October 2007. Based on the metrics from these ports for the week of December 28, the estimated wait time for pre-enrolled applicants was 18 minutes, except in Baton Rouge, where wait times averaged 40-50 minutes, and the average enrollment time was 10.91 minutes. There continues to be considerable variation in these statistics from port to port.

TSA and enrollment contractor Lockheed Martin provided a status report on their progress in addressing stakeholder concerns discussed at the last meeting of TSCC on December 5. They said they are beginning to see improvements in the area of fingerprint matching as new means are being deployed to help individuals with hard-to-capture fingerprints avoid return trips to the enrollment center. They have also had some success in improving the payment systems and have devised a process that has lessened the necessity of a billing address in order to process a credit card payment. Additional means for improvement are also being explored.

TSA and Lockheed acknowledged that there are still some problems with activation of TWIC cards that may be related to time of day and the traffic experienced during peak periods. Methods for improvement in this area are being developed and deployed. Enrollment volume in Baton Rouge also continues to be higher than expected. Based on the high turnout, TSA will be deploying mobile enrollment centers to Baton Rouge and Minneapolis.

AWO Government Affairs Associate Krista Reddington raised a specific issue of concern to AWO members regarding notification that TWIC cards have arrived at the enrollment center and are ready to be picked up. TSA explained that individuals may not be notified of the arrival of their TWIC cards right away because the cards are processed in batches. The cards must be scanned into the system in order to trigger a notification of arrival. TSA advised that, in the coming weeks, some batches of cards

may be held longer because activations may delay the scanning of cards.



AWO again questioned the Coast Guard and TSA on the possible extension of the September 25, 2008, deadline for affected mariners to have a TWIC and reiterated the industry's serious concern that, given the many delays in the implementation process, not all mariners will be able to obtain a TWIC by this regulatory deadline. The agencies responded that, while TSA and the Coast Guard have the authority to extend the deadline, there are no plans to extend the deadline and the agency has no target date in mind for making such a decision.

In other discussion, TSA and the Coast Guard advised the TSCC that:

- The Coast Guard will send a letter to all licensed or documented mariners advising them of the requirement to obtain a TWIC; and,
- The current TWIC disclosure form will be used through March 2008. The agency has been advised of several items on the form that have caused confusion and will try to rectify these problems on the new form.

The next TSCC meeting will be held on February 5. To share your TWIC enrollment experience (positive or negative), please contact Jennifer Carpenter or Krista Reddington at (703) 841-9300, extensions 260 and 251, respectively, or via email at [jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com](mailto:jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com) or [kreddington@vesselalliance.com](mailto:kreddington@vesselalliance.com). Member concerns will be shared (anonymously) with TSA, the Coast Guard and Lockheed Martin officials, and agency responses will be reported in future editions of the *AWO Letter*. ❁



If you receive a hard copy of the *AWO Letter* and need to know the exact Web addresses of the hyperlinks in any articles, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or [mccarthy@vesselalliance.com](mailto:mccarthy@vesselalliance.com). ❁

## Towing Safety Advisory Committee Applicants Sought

The U.S. Coast Guard is currently requesting applications for membership on the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC). TSAC is an important federal advisory committee that provides a unique forum for Coast Guard-industry collaboration on regulatory issues affecting the tugboat,



towboat and barge industry, including towing vessel inspection, licensing of towing vessel officers, and medical and physical evaluation criteria for merchant mariner credentials.

The Coast Guard is accepting applications for two seats from the barge and towing industry; one seat from port districts, authorities or terminal operators; one seat from maritime labor; and, one seat from the general public, that become available on September 30, 2008. Applications are available for download [here](#) and must be submitted to the Coast Guard by February 15, 2008.

Applications should be submitted to:

Commandant (CG-5221/TSAC)  
U.S. Coast Guard, Room 1210  
2100 Second Street SW  
Washington, DC 20593-0001.

Please write "TSAC" in the section entitled "Name of Committee you are interested in," and indicate for which seat you are applying.

AWO encourages interested members to apply. For more information about TSAC, please contact Jennifer Carpenter at (703) 841-9300, extension 260, or via email at [jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com](mailto:jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com).

### TWIC ENROLLMENT UPDATE

TWIC enrollment began at the following ports:

- **December 12, 2007:** Los Angeles/ Long Beach, CA
- **December 20, 2007:** Peoria and Joliet, IL
- **December 27, 2007:** Memphis, TN
- **December 28, 2007:** Buffalo, NY
- **January 3, 2008:** Hilo, HI

TWIC enrollment will begin at the following ports:

- **January 16, 2008:** International Falls, MN; Ontonagon, MI; Morehead City, NC; Victoria, TX; and, Huntington, WV
- **January 17, 2008:** Port Canaveral, FL; Portland, OR; and, Kahului, Maui, HI
- **January 25, 2008:** Kauai, HI

For the complete up-to-date TWIC Quarterly Deployment Plan, please click [here](#).

## 2008 AWO Safety Calendar Orders Now Being Accepted

The 2008 AWO Safety Calendar was unveiled at the Fall Convention in Houston, TX, revealing the winners of the seventh annual Photo Contest. The theme of this year's calendar is "Crew



Endurance Management" and each page contains an important safety message. It is also a tool that AWO uses to promote the industry's commitment to safe operations by distributing the calendar to members of Congress, regulators in the Coast Guard and other federal agencies, state legislators and the media. Each AWO member company will receive a calendar as a gift soon, and additional calendars are on sale for \$12 each. If you would like to order calendars, please fill out the attached form and mail it with a check, or fax it and be invoiced, to:

Mary McCarthy  
The American Waterways Operators  
801 North Quincy Street  
Suite 200  
Arlington, VA 22203  
(703) 841-0389 (fax)

## Exxon Files Brief with Supreme Court in Appeal of *Exxon Valdez* Case

On December 17, Exxon Shipping Company filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in its appeal of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision that allowed the largest punitive damage award in U.S. history for the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Prince William Sound. The Supreme Court decided on October 29, 2007, to hear the case, but agreed to hear arguments only about the maritime issues involved, which are:

1. Whether punitive damages may be imposed against a ship owner (Exxon) for the actions of a vessel's master (the master of the *Exxon Valdez*);
2. Whether a federal law (in this case, the Clean Water Act) that does not provide for punitive damages preempts a court's decision to award punitive damages; and,
3. Should the Court determine that punitive damages are available, it will also decide on the standards for awarding punitive damages under maritime law.

AWO, along with more than a dozen other organizations, filed *amicus curiae* briefs in support of the appeal, illustrating the case's importance to the maritime industry. However, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin has asked the state attorney general to file its own amicus brief in support of the local fisherman and residents who originally filed the suit against Exxon. Congressman Don Young (R-AK) also may sign the state's amicus brief, but Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) has yet to comment on his willingness to do so.

To read AWO's amicus brief, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Tom Allegretti at (703) 841-9300, extension 250, or at [tallegretti@vesselalliance.com](mailto:tallegretti@vesselalliance.com).

## CEMS *Training Opportunities*

The Crew Endurance Management System (CEMS) is a system for managing risk factors in maritime work environments that can lead to human error and performance slumps. The Coast Guard and AWO have been working together to help companies implement the principles of CEMS. In this space, AWO will publish details of CEMS training opportunities around the country. For further information on CEMS training opportunities, please contact LCDR Vivianne Louie, U.S. Coast Guard, at (202) 267-0173.

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
January 15-16	Ingram Barge Company Paducah, KY	LCDR Vivianne Louie (Contact) (202) 372-1358 <a href="mailto:Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil">Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil</a>
January 21-22	Salyers Solutions, LLC New Orleans, LA	Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) (504) 236-4962 <a href="mailto:salyers_solutions@hughes.net">salyers_solutions@hughes.net</a>
January 22-23	AEP MEMCO Gallipolis, OH	LCDR Vivianne Louie (Contact) (202) 372-1358 <a href="mailto:Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil">Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil</a>
February 12-13	Ingram Barge Company Paducah, KY	LCDR Vivianne Louie (Contact) (202) 372-1358 <a href="mailto:Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil">Vivianne.W.Louie@uscg.mil</a>

## 2008 AWO Letter Sponsorships Now Available

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|---------------|-------------|----------------|
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| ■ February 8  | ■ June 6    | ■ September 26 |
| ■ February 22 | ■ June 20   | ■ October 10   |
| ■ March 7     | ■ July 7    | ■ October 24   |
| ■ March 21    | ■ July 18   | ■ November 7   |
| ■ April 4     | ■ August 1  | ■ November 21  |
| ■ April 25    | ■ August 15 | ■ December 5   |
| ■ May 9       | ■ August 29 | ■ December 19  |

If you are interested in securing a sponsorship, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-0389 or [mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com](mailto:mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com).

## “Rolling on the River: Life on a Tugboat”

The following article, written by Debra Perry and featuring AWO member Crouse Corporation, appeared in the *Maysville (KY) Ledger Independent* on December 22, 2007.

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When it comes to maneuvering along the Ohio River, gone are the days of steering a towboat by a big wheel, called the helm, and charting the course of the river by paper maps.

Now Crouse Corporation towboats push barges and cruise along the Ohio River and its tributaries including excursions into Pittsburgh, Illinois, and Alabama, navigating with sophisticated instrument panels, electronic screens, and levers to push and steer the load that is 195 feet long, holds 1,700 tons and goes top speed of 6 miles per hour.

And while crew members are on board three weeks at a time, the time past tradition of long stretches of wait between ports to a pay phone to call home, or endless days of primarily only books or cards for entertainment, are replaced with cell phones, TV, DVDs, videos and sometimes even satellite service.

“There used to be pay phones at the locks and dams when we fueled and got supplies,” said David Reed, who has been port captain for Crouse for 19 years, and has worked in the shipping industry 38 years. And if there were an emergency between ports, “we had a marine operator, and a radio link, but it was not a private line.”

As port captain at Crouse’s Maysville office on Commerce Street, Reed’s duties include serving as liaison between crew and management, dealing with regulatory matters and running the office. The Crouse Corporate office is in Paducah. The company employs 300 people, has a

fleet of 27 towboats, 860 barges and hauls more than 30 million tons a year, according to its Web site.

While Reed misses his adventures of 22 years as captain on the water, he said, “I like going home at night.” That’s because the crew of seven on each tugboat learns to live out of a suitcase on a 21 days on and 21 days off schedule. The same crew usually remains together, said Reed, with some working together for years.

As they float down or up the river, crew members spend their time on a rigid schedule of six hours on duty and six hours off, attending to the needs of the boat and the barges full of coal, or aggregates including limestone headed to a distant destination.

The captain of the ship and pilot, in essence a captain in training, work together. The captain works 6 a.m. to noon and the pilot noon to 6 p.m. The captain resumes work 6 p.m. to midnight and the pilot takes over the ship’s duties midnight to 6 a.m.

“That’s called the front and back watch,” said Reed.

Other crew members include the chief engineer and second engineer who deal with the motors, making rounds in the engine room and repairs to the boat, filters and doing preventative maintenance, Two deckhands attend to the large barges, general maintenance of the vessel, keep on eye on the hatches to look for water in the voids and if any is, found pump it out, help tie barges on and together, and help the captain guide through the various locks encountered on a trip. They also “sooge” the boat, giving it a good wash down with soap and water three times a trip because of the coal residue that wafts onto the boat from the barge being pushed ahead of it. When their



specific work duties are done they are “on watch” until relieving the person replacing them.

Each pair share duties, and are roommates as well. Each sleeping quarter is outfitted with bathroom, two single beds, dresser drawers for both, and a TV. Crew members bring in their own sheets and blankets to personalize their stay.

And don’t forget the cook. He or she is on his or her own schedule. Reed said Crouse has a 50/50 split of men and women in the position.

A galley kitchen, outfitted with a commercial stove, refrigerator, freezer and full pantry is the cook’s work arena where three full meals are prepared daily.

The cook usually gets up very early and prepares a full breakfast of bacon, eggs, and homestyle gravy, according to Reed. Those on watch eat first before they relieve the next man to come on duty, and so on. Between naps to make up for the early call and meals, the cook may peel potatoes or make pies, cookies or bread.

The boats are running all the time, and if they are on the waterway come the holidays, the cook prepares an appropriate holiday meal. Reed said the crews often exchange gifts. “It’s like a second family.”

Each boat has an open galley policy where workers can come and fix

(continued on page 8)

## “Rolling on the River: Life on a Tugboat”

*(continued from page 7)*

themselves something to eat anytime. The galley not only serves as a place to eat, it serves as a place to hang out around a big table and TV.

“The cook is a sounding board for everybody,” Reed said. If there is a problem on the boat, most likely the cook is the first to know because the galley is a gathering place.

“They know what’s going on and the feelings of the crew,” Reed said.

The ability to get along is a big consideration when hiring crew. Reed said the boating industry generally pays good salaries, running from \$30,000 entry level to \$85,000 industry wide. But it’s not necessarily a good fit for everyone.

While Crouse takes applications all the time, notices are posted in newspapers when positions open. Selected applicants go through a series of tests that see if their personality, physical and oral abilities are suited to the position.

Crew members have to maneuver on walkways 18 to 20 inches wide, “It’s a dangerous job,” Reed said. “Crew members are out in the environment in a moving vessel and inclement weather including snow, ice and rain all hours, day and night.”

Reed said boats run in restricted visibility with fog. And if the water is high, it’s equally if not more dangerous.

Hands are wet, cold and frozen in the winter. And in the summer it’s very hot on the boat with heat radiating from the steel structure. Crew members are encouraged to be aware of their conditions, preventing frostbite in the winter and drinking lots of water to prevent heat exhaustion in the summer.

“It sneaks up on you,” Reed said.

Once hired, crew members not only have to learn the ropes, but learn things no one can teach including how to manage time, deal with isolation and loneliness, how to get along with others, and tolerate separation from family. Sometimes it’s harder on the family members who stay at home. Reed suggests the worker put a list together for their family of who to call in an emergency, including home repair emergencies.

Justin Bonnell is a second engineer in his late 20s from Brooksville who began as a deckhand a few years ago.

When asked how he became interested in working on a boat he said, “It sounded like a good job for me as a single guy.”

“The schedule is nice,” Bonnell said, because he can take a vacation on his three weeks off. And he said the food is great. He never has to worry about packing a lunch and what to eat.

He said those who would consider working on the boat should “consider to be away a good part of the time and expect to do some work. Be ready for what it is,” he said. “Also you’ll be isolated with six other people.”

Bonnell brings magazines, books and watches TV to pass the time. He said his first trip out he made sure to bring his duffel bag, clothes and shampoo, but forgot cigarettes and had to go half the trip without them.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things to get used to on the boat, Reed said, is sleeping.

“Your sleep pattern is broken up,” Reed says with the six hour rotation. And veterans have to remind the newer, younger crew members

especially to pace themselves and not spend all their waking hours watching TV or playing video games. Getting plenty of exercise is encouraged, and sometimes crew members bring exercise equipment on board if there is an extra room.

“They have to learn to manage their time,” Reed says.

Crouse Captain Dan Mattox agreed.

“Fatigue is one of the worst enemies on the boat. I try to get as much rest as I possibly can.” Mattox, a veteran river boatman from Fleming County.

“It’s a great career. The hardest is staying away from family an extended time,” Mattox said. He said the divorce rate is high in the industry. He and his wife, Carolyn have been married 44 years and have worked out a system through the years. She even worked as a cook at one time on another line and understands the ins and outs.

“It’s hard for the younger ones and girlfriends,” she said. “I don’t have any small children; it’s a little better for me than some,”

Mattox has only three requirements of his crew: “Do your job. Keep the boat clean. And get along together.” He said he’s fortunate to have a “really good crew.”

A captain just doesn’t sit back and daydream. “You’ve got to know where you want to be at any given time,” Mattox said. “As I drive the boat I think what’s going to happen 5 miles down the river. Is there a bridge, a lock? You have to be in the right place.”

Ten years ago a good radar system was installed on the boats which gives a real-time picture of what’s ahead. Looking on the monitor, you can see

*(continued on page 9)*

## “Rolling on the River: Life on a Tugboat”

(continued from page 8)

blips on radar which identify buoys, bridges, and other items.

Around the captain’s cabin is a VHF radio, radar, coffee pot, binoculars, navigational charting, fax, cell phone, e-mail capability, throttles and yes, even paper charts as a backup, (plus a hidden toilet to be used in case of emergencies),

Behind the instrument panel is the captain’s chair, and behind it a “liars bench” where crew members can come up and sit and chat.

As he’s piloting the boat, Mattox is looking for obstructions in the river such as buoys, bends, tight places and bridges. Equal danger can come when dealing with low water or high flood water, and another obstacle... pleasure boaters.

“Pleasure boaters are my biggest nightmare,” Mattox said.

“My tow is the size of four football fields end to end, or one fifth of a mile, at least 1,200 foot out there,” Mattox said. “We push 30,000 tons fully loaded, and go 5 miles per hour.”

Reed said pleasure boating is an on-going concern.

“I encourage anyone considering coming to the river in a boat to investigate the area, know the hazardous, learn safe boating rules and the dangers and act accordingly,” Reed said.

Captains don’t have the entire river to themselves. Any day you head down to the river you can see towboats pushing barges passing one another.

Mattox said if his boat is heading north and another is coming

southbound, the southbound has the right of way, because they are harder to control. So the captains or pilots ID each other and determine where they are, what’s ahead and where they plan to meet. Upon approaching within eyesight of three quarters of a mile, they blow the boat’s whistle.

One whistle is left to left, or port to port, and two whistles is right to right, or starboard to starboard, meaning with a two-whistle signal the other boat would pass on the starboard, or right side of the vessel. Every vessel, tow or tugboat is required to blow unless they have an agreement on channel 13 of the VHF radio to communicate. Five whistles means danger ahead.

Captains also have to be prepared to enter the locks.

“There is a series of locks down the Ohio River,” Reed said.

The water levels aren’t the same along the way. Boats have to transition from

one pool, or level to the next, It takes 30 minutes to an hour. Based on elevation. Pittsburgh is the highest and Cairo, Ill., the lowest.

Reed said deckhands are the captain’s eyes when it comes to making a lock.

Mattox agreed.

“The tow is 1,200 foot by 105 wide, and the lock is 110 feet wide,” Mattox explained. The deck hand helps direct him to guide the barges and boat into the locks safely.

He remembers early in his career before Crouse when he first learned to make a lock, and didn’t have any formal training. A crew member asked “Do you think this is where we’re all going to die?” and Mattox replied, “Lord, I hope not.”

While many employees of Crouse are first generation, there are families serving in their fourth generation on the water. 🌊

### Southern Region

## Army Corps of Engineers to Expedite MRGO Closure

On December 19, Senator David Vitter (R-LA) announced that “provisions in previous supplemental funding bills and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2007 granted the Corps full authority and funding” to begin closure of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO). He further noted that the Corps had agreed to “expedite the closure.”



To read the Senator’s press release, please click [here](#). For further information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at [lmuench@vesselalliance.com](mailto:lmuench@vesselalliance.com). 🌊

Southern Region

## Last Chance: Register for the Southern Region Annual Meeting

The 2008 Southern Region Annual Meeting will be held on January 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the InterContinental Hotel in New Orleans, LA. A reception is scheduled on January 17 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

To register for the meeting, click [here](#). To access the meeting packet, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or [hwellman@vesselalliance.com](mailto:hwellman@vesselalliance.com).

Atlantic Region

## CAPE COD CANAL SURVEY DATA RELEASED TO AID NAVIGATION

The Army Corps of Engineers has distributed the final 2007 hydrographic survey data for the Cape Cod Canal, as well as a map of Canal landmarks and stationing along the Canal so that mariners can cross reference them to discern where the data is located. This information is the result of cooperation between the Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers and AWO, and achieves AWO's goal of helping mariners to navigate the Canal safely and efficiently.

To view the hydrographic survey data, click [here](#). To view the Canal map, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 373-2297, or via email at [cCoakley@vesselalliance.com](mailto:cCoakley@vesselalliance.com).

Atlantic Region

## Atlantic Region Members to Establish Regional Priorities at Annual Meeting

At the Atlantic Region Annual Meeting on January 25 at the Marriott Miami Biscayne Bay Hotel in Miami, FL, members will discuss and vote on which issues should be included in the 2008 Atlantic Region Priorities. The Atlantic Region priorities are revised annually at regional meetings and direct AWO's advocacy work in the Atlantic Region. At the January 25 meeting, members must decide if the proposed 2008 priorities are of sufficient concern to the regional membership to warrant AWO's focus throughout the year.



Current priorities include institutionalizing a congressional grassroots program, seeking exemption from the petroleum business tax in New York, protecting members from disruptive or unsafe state legislative and regulatory initiatives (such as those in Buzzards Bay, MA), managing the regional Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership, and growing the political action committee (PAC). To aid members in the discussion of regional priorities, a draft of the 2008 priorities will be distributed via email two weeks prior to the meeting as part of a preparatory packet. If you have questions about the priorities or the regional meeting, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 373-2297 or Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at [hwellman@vesselalliance.com](mailto:hwellman@vesselalliance.com).

Pacific Region

## Register Now for the Pacific Region Annual Meeting

Please register for the Pacific Region Annual Meeting to be held on February 7, 2008, at Salty's on Alki, 1936 Harbor Avenue, SW, Seattle, WA. You can register by clicking [here](#) or by contacting Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at [hwellman@vesselalliance.com](mailto:hwellman@vesselalliance.com).



Registration and breakfast will begin at 7:30 a.m., and the meeting will commence at 8:00 a.m. and end at noon. The agenda is packed with informative updates and discussion on regional and national issues. Along with issue updates, the membership and AWO staff will select the region's Board members, adopt the regional priorities and listen to a Coast Guard speaker discuss the future of licensing.

For more information on the meeting, please contact Jason Lewis at (206) 262-7308, or via email at [jlewis@vesselalliance.com](mailto:jlewis@vesselalliance.com).

Pacific Region***California Air Resources Board Harbor Craft Regulation Amendment Delayed***

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has delayed the release of its amended harbor craft regulation language. Originally, CARB was scheduled to publish its amendments to the harbor craft regulation by the end of 2007, but that deadline has been pushed back until the end of January 2008.

On November 15, CARB held a hearing on the draft of its proposed harbor craft regulation. The Board adopted two amendments, the first setting a more aggressive compliance timeline for ferries, and the second setting a compliance timeline extension for engines with the model years 2009 and 2010. There was also discussion of reducing some of the administrative burdens relating to the rule surrounding extensions to the deadlines and recordkeeping.

For additional information, please contact Jason Lewis, Vice President-Pacific Region, at (206) 262-7308, or via email at [jlewis@vesselalliance.com](mailto:jlewis@vesselalliance.com).

**Don't Forget to Register for the Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Annual Meeting**

The 2008 Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Annual Meeting will be held on January 31 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville, TN. A reception is scheduled on January 30 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

To register, click [here](#). The meeting packets will be emailed next week. For more information, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at [hwellman@vesselalliance.com](mailto:hwellman@vesselalliance.com).

Midcontinent**Ninth Coast Guard District Accepts Eighth District Limited Geographic Licenses for Towing Vessels Engaged in Fleeting Operations**

On October 8, 2007, RADM John E. Crowley, Jr. issued a Ninth Coast Guard District Instruction letter to direct Sector Lake Michigan to follow the Eighth District Limited Geographic Licensing for harbor services on the Western Rivers. Sector Lake Michigan was instructed to identify "areas of the Western Rivers within their Area of Responsibility that are applicable to this policy." RADM Crowley also directed Regional Exam Center Toledo to "issue a limited license contingent on the mariner meeting all requirements."

To view a copy of the Ninth District Instruction letter, click [here](#). To view the original policy letter from the Eighth District, click [here](#).

For more information, please contact Lynn M. Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at [lmuench@vesselalliance.com](mailto:lmuench@vesselalliance.com).

**Sector Ohio Valley:  
Barge Breakaway Policy Implemented**

Sector Ohio Valley has standardized its response to barge breakaways. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Letter was released in July 2007 and discussed during the recent Marine Safety Unit (MSU)-Huntington and MSU-Pittsburgh luncheon in December. The SOP Letter outlines how the Coast Guard will work to prevent barge breakaways and response to breakaways. Issues such as communications and coordination with industry and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and enforcement actions are outlined in the letter.

For a copy of the SOP Letter, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Lynn M. Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at [lmuench@vesselalliance.com](mailto:lmuench@vesselalliance.com).

**Missouri River Annual Operating Plan Released**

The final 2007-2008 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System is now available at the "Reports and Publications" link on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Northwestern Division Web site at <http://www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/rcc/>.

For more information, please contact Lynn M. Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at [lmuench@vesselalliance.com](mailto:lmuench@vesselalliance.com).

